

## Abstract of the Invention

A process control system is configured via manipulation of objects that model system components, e.g., sensors, blocks, control processors, historians, workstations, etc. Individual objects include parameters that characterize the underlying components and/or the behavior of the objects themselves. These parameters are derived from the "parents," from which the objects are created. Derived characteristics need not be defined explicitly but, rather, are defined implicitly or by reference. These derived characteristics may be overridden for an individual object and, thereby, its progeny. Although objects have class-like characteristics (i.e., insofar as they are definitional in nature), they can be created at configuration time, without the need for recompilation.

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